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## Airborne Laser changes affiliation with SMC

by **Ken Englade, Kirtland AFB ASC**

*KIRTLAND AFB, N.M.* — Airborne Laser officials formally ended the nearly decade-long affiliation with the Space and Missile System Center Oct. 12 as they transitioned personnel management functions to the Aeronautical Systems Center.

The transfer from the Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif., location to the one at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, had been in the planning stages almost since the time the Airborne Laser was conceived in the early 1990s. Officials said it was moved forward this summer when the Air Force transferred SMC to its space command. Since ABL was not considered a space program, the transition to ASC was advanced by several years.

Both SMC and ASC were under the Air Force Materiel Command, also based at Wright-Patterson.

Under the transition, members of the Kirtland-based ABL System Program Office will transfer to ASC slots but all will remain in New Mexico. Officials also said ABL funding and program management transferred to the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization Nov. 1. BMDO is a joint service organization under the Office of the Secretary of the Defense that oversees missile defense programs for all the services.

Once that process has been completed, YAL-1A will be flown to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., where the Beam Control/Fire Control, and laser segments will be installed and tested. The culmination of testing is scheduled to come late in 2003 when YAL-1A shoots down a Scud-like missile over the Pacific Ocean. @